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ABSTRACT

From 1880 through the mid-1920s, reformers labored to make a "New South" through the agency of public education. During those years, North Carolina led the way in building thousands of new schoolhouses, professionalizing teacher training, and developing an elaborate educational bureaucracy. Southern educational reform turned on the transition from the common school to graded education. Chapter 1 of this book, "A Classroom Revolution," examines early approaches to public instruction in the one-room school and the opposition by proponents of a more rational pedagogy. Chapter 2, "Apostles of the New South," looks at graduates of the University of North Carolina in the late 1870s and early 1880s, who had grown up during the Civil War and longed for the South's integration into the modern world. Public school careers offered graduates the means to turn away from their fathers' world and turn towards the arena in which to pursue the task of modernizing their region. Chapter 3, "Servants of the State," discusses the White women who became the university graduates' loyal allies. North Carolina's first normal college for White women opened in 1891, and by 1920 women made up 86 percent of classroom teachers. Chapter 4, "Voices of Dissent," explores the battle over alternative paths of southern development. The most determined opponents were Baptists, whose church traditions were founded on local autonomy, and African Americans, who watched White graded schools advance at the expense of their own children's education. Chapter 5, "Rubes and Redeemers," examines efforts to consolidate reforms in rural areas through physical improvements to schools, a regional campaign to form school farming clubs, and public health campaigns backed by northern philanthropists. Chapter 6, "The Riddle of Race," discusses racial segregation and the efforts of Black women teachers to affirm racial dignity and a sense of common citizenship in the classroom. (Contains references in notes, an extensive bibliography, an index, and photographs.) (SV)